

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

20-D-219

Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

May 23, 1988

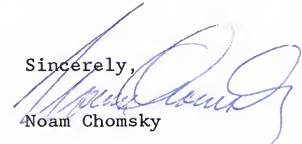
Dear Mr. Kelman,

Thanks very much for your invitation to visit Glasgow, and also for the collection of short stories, which I am very pleased to have and look forward to reading when the pace relaxes slightly in a few weeks.

The idea of visiting the Free University, and Scotland generally, is very appealing, and your letter made it more so. I've been trying to see if my very tight schedule can be juggled to allow it to work out somehow. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be any way. I'd planned to be in England for only 3 days (not 10, as you heard -- a ten day trip abroad is an almost unheard of luxury for me for the past 20 years; just too many demands here). Unfortunately I can't extend it at either end, because of other commitments here. Demands for speaking in particular are extraordinarily heavy, more than ever before, because of the combination of defection of intellectuals to the right (therefore, few speakers) and substantial growth of popular groups all over the place (who need outside speakers, both for information and discussion, or even for organizing purposes -- an excuse to bring people together and bring in new people). I'm booked up into late 1990, solidly. Within the three days, it is pretty tight. I'm afraid I don't see any way to work it out, to my regret.

I'd like to try to arrange it sometime. Maybe there'll be another occasion. If you don't mind, I'll file your letters away and if I do manage another trip to Britain before too long, will contact you to see if we can work something out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Noam Chomsky', is written over the typed name.

Noam Chomsky

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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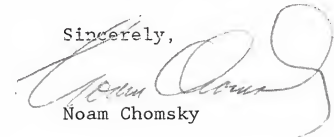
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

February 12, 1989

Dear Mr. Kelman,

Thanks to some rearrangements, cancellations, and reschedulings, I have finally been able to arrange to visit Glasgow next January, about the 10th. I wonder if we could pick up the ideas we were discussing some time back?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Noam Chomsky', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Noam Chomsky

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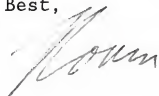
April 26, 1989

Dear James,

Got both your letter and your book (thanks), the latter set aside for summer reading (actually, it was ripped off at once by Jamie Young, who runs the show here). Arrangements for Glasgow are by now firmed up, for about the 10th-11th. Can we work out something?

I'd be most interested in reading the essay that you didn't send, but thanks for the one you did (Davie's Dow lecture), which I found quite interesting. I'm looking forward to seeing more. The only real disagreement I felt was in (at least the implication of) the final passages. I don't think that Locke's tabula rasa doctrine (borrowed from neo-scholasticism) opens the way to the radical vision he suggests; rather, it bars the way. In contrast, what he regards as the Scottish pessimism opens the way to an optimistic view of human potential, though, to be sure, with the intrinsic limitations that are a logical consequence of capacity to achieve anything nontrivial. I think there has been a great deal of confusion about this, based really on careless reasoning, for reasons I've discussed at length elsewhere.

Best,



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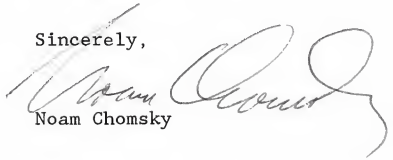
May 8, 1989

Dear Mr. Kelman,

Thanks very much for the material, set aside for summer reading. I wish I knew more about the material you discuss. Sounds most interesting, and worth an intense look. Much intrigued to hear about the new play.

About next January, accidents excepted, I'm expecting to be in Glasgow. I don't know exactly what is scheduled for me, but I'm sure we can work it out. What, exactly, would make sense, from your point of view?

Sincerely,



Noam Chomsky

34
anywhere. The last comment has to do with page 24 and my critique of the structuralist approach. This really has nothing to do with incompleteness. The problem is that Harris, Bloomfield, and others were seeking a system of analytic taxonomic procedures that could carry them from a text from some language to a description of that language, and we now know that such procedures simply do not exist. My critique was essentially based on that observation.

Hope to be able to get back to you with a more serious letter later on, and I do very much hope that this unpleasant business will not delay my visit to Scotland.

Sincerely,

Noam Chomsky

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'JC' or similar, written below the printed name 'Noam Chomsky'.

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Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
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June 14, 1989

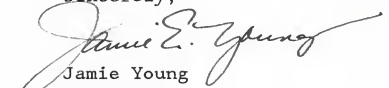
James Kelman
244 West Princes Street
Glasgow G4 9DP
Scotland

Dear Mr. Kelman,

Professor Noam Chomsky is away from MIT for the summer months and I am writing for him to let you know that your letter was received here at his office. I am sorry for the form letter but it is the most efficient way we have found to deal with the large volume of mail he receives.

Your letter will be forwarded to Professor Chomsky as soon as possible, however, because of the rerouting it may be several weeks before you receive a response. We appreciate your patience. In the meantime, if you have any questions that I may be able to answer, feel free to contact me at the address above or by telephone at (617)253-7819.

Sincerely,



Jamie Young
Secretary
MIT Linguistics

/jy

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

20-D-219

Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

June 15, 1989

Dear Jim,

Didn't realize that I hadn't told you that Derek Rodger was arranging my other talk. I thought I'd written that. Sorry. Anyway, glad it turned out to be a small world and you met, and that now things are on track.

The arrangements look fine to me. Sure, I'd be pleased to take part in the Thursday events. Arrange anything that seems reasonable. I'm really looking forward to it.

Hope you have (had) a fine time in Newfoundland.

Best,

Noam

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

20-D-219

Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

July 10, 1989

James Kelman
244 West Princes Street
Glasgow G4 9DP
Scotland

Dear Mr. Kelman,

Professor Chomsky asked me to write to you to let you know that he has received your letter of June 15. He is unable to answer you personally right now because he is hospitalized with a back injury. You should be hearing from him in a few weeks or whenever he is able to get back to writing and answering his mail.

Sincerely,



Jamie Young
Secretary, Linguistics - MIT
(617)253-7819

/jy

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

20-D-219

Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

August 15, 1989

James Kelman
244 W. Princes St.
Glasgow G4 9DP
Scotland

Dear James,

First of all, apologies for my long delay in getting back to you after your letter of June 15 and the paper that I received from you. I've been in the hospital all summer, ending up finally with back surgery, and have just gotten out a few days ago. I'm now at home beginning what may be a rather lengthy period of recovery, lasting over a couple of months or so. They tell me that I should be getting back to normal function before too long. I very much hope that none of this delays my visit to Glasgow next January. I have had to call off travel over the fall, but I'm keeping my fingers crossed and hoping by January that I'll be up to a transatlantic flight and something like a regular schedule. Be back in touch with you before too long about all of that.

At the moment I still am unable to sit down at the computer and type a real letter so this one is coming to you via dictation and I apologize for the likely incoherence resulting from the unfamiliarity with this art.

I enjoyed and appreciated the paper very much, in particular the parts about the Scottish tradition and its relation to some of the things I've discussed. Most of that is, as you gathered, unfamiliar to me, though I do hope to learn more about it. I had a few comments, not many. On page 9, you say that it was only after Syntactic Structures that I abandoned a behaviorist approach and accepted the primacy of semantics in the study of language. That's not quite accurate. Syntactic Structures is actually a brief excerpt from a much longer book, which was then unpublishable, entitled The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory. That one in fact came out only 20 years later. At the time it was considered neither fish nor fowl and the commentators for the publishers simply said they didn't know what it was and didn't know whether it could or could not be published. But, in any event, even that book, and surely Syntactic Structures, did accept the primacy of semantics in the sense that any linguistic theory would have to be judged adequate or inadequate on the basis of its ability to account for semantic facts. In fact, a large part of Syntactic Structures is devoted to precisely that question. On page 11, you refer to Piaget's critique. Piaget and I actually took part in a lengthy discussion about these topics a couple of years later. The problem is that there simply is nothing to the third process that he mentions. It's impossible to formulate, and it turns out to be nothing but metaphor and empty rhetoric. By now I think these ideas have largely been abandoned in cognitive psychology simply because they don't get

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September 13, 1989

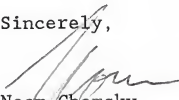
Dear James,

Just got your letter. Glad to hear that the essay will appear. About my comments, do as you think best. If you think they're coherent and helpful, then use them, of course. You may have to turn them back into English; as I remember, I was flat on my back at the time, dictating.

I'm improving, and am now up and about. I had a post-surgery checkup today and raised the question of flights. They want me to keep away from airplanes for the rest of this year. When I raised the question of a transatlantic flight in January, the answer was a qualified OK assuming that everything continues as of now, except that they don't want me to fly tourist any more because of the cramped position. One way or another, I expect to make it. I had originally planned side trips in Iceland and Ireland, but cancelled these, so it'll be Glasgow and back. I'm much looking forward to it, and hope that there are no problems.

Look forward to seeing the next batch of short stories.

Sincerely,



Noam Chomsky

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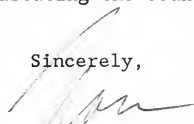
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

December 14, 1989

Dear Jim,

I've been holding off answering your letter while I tried to figure out if I was going to be able to make it to Glasgow. Looks right now as though it will be OK. I haven't been allowed to do any plane travel yet, but seems that by January it should be OK. So, looking forward to seeing you then. Hope you are not down with flu, which seems to be devastating the country right now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Noam', written over a light grey rectangular stamp.

Noam Chomsky

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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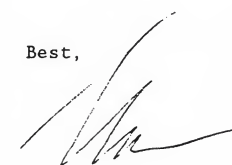
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

January 16, 1990

Dear Mark,

Just returned from a trip to Scotland, my first travel since the operation. Went fine, so I guess I'm back on the road. The Scotland affair might be of some interest to you. It was quite different from the usual, and it was filmed by people who seem to be fairly professional (independent movement activist types, but evidently knowing their business). The affair was a two-day conference in Govan, a run-down suburb of Glasgow that used to be a ship-building area but is now the usual mixture of slum and high rise, mostly slum. It was held in a community hall that was donated by some magnate about a century ago for the locals, and is used for community groups (aged, homeless, etc.). The participants were basically local activists, artists, etc., pretty far out of the mainstream; about 1/3 unemployed, in fact. There was enormous interest, and they had to turn hundreds of applicants. The Labor Party was much annoyed by the whole thing, first, because they couldn't control it, and second, because they can't stand the libertarian tone of these rifraff. They actually cancelled a talk they'd invited me to give on Central America because I refused to dissociate myself from the conference (ended up giving it at the university in Edinburgh -- the sequence of events was quite educational for all concerned, including Labor Party and Central America activists). There was lots of national and local press coverage -- also interviews on BBC, press, the usual outside the US borders. Press conferences were held in the pub across the street (filmed, I think). The only institutional sponsor was another pub, kind of bohemian hangout for local artists and writers. If any of this sounds interesting, I can put you in touch. Would be different, anyway. I turned down all the academic invitations, which seemed to ruffle the expected feathers. Interesting couple of days, actually.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Mark', written in a cursive style.

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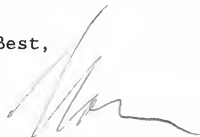
January 29, 1990

Dear Jim,

I'm still on a high from that great week in Scotland. I really wished my wife had come along. She'd have loved it. It was an exhilarating experience for me -- far more satisfying than the usual routine on these myriad speaking tours. Are there any plans for follow-up activities? It would be a shame to let all that energy go to waste. Hope we can keep in touch, and find another opportunity to enter the fray together one of these days.

Thanks very much for the book, which looks fascinating, and a great source for marvellous quotes. Which reminds me: I haven't heard yet from the people who were doing the editing (forgot their names, I'm afraid). They were going to send me details about the format they wanted for my talks. I guess they want all three: the long one the first day, the Central America talk the night before, and the remarks the second day. Are there any further plans about publication?

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Jim', written in a cursive style.

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May 28, 1990

Dear Jim and Derek,

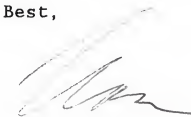
Finally, with the pressures of the year winding down a bit, I got to the task of finishing up the papers for the Glasgow conference, and sent them off to Ramsey. I am really sorry it took so long, and hope that this hasn't caused too much of a delay in the publishing plans.

You (Jim) mentioned in your letter some time back that you would be sending copies of an ugly attack on George Davie and a response by Chris that was to appear, and also said that Tom Leonard's Radical Renfrew would be on the way. I don't think they arrived -- though, maybe, they got lost in the shuffle here. You can't imagine the disorder that accumulates.

I'd been invited to a conference in the Basque country that seemed to have much the character of ours in Glasgow, but couldn't go. They asked me for a paper for their volume of essays anyway, and I said I'd send them the one for Glasgow, if that is OK with you. The editor is a guy named Jose Goñi. I also said that he should write to you to ask permission formally. They seem to be good people.

It was a great couple of days, a wonderful way for me to break my six-month long fast (of no travel), and a source of warm memories ever since. Hope to get to see you soon before too long. Keep in touch.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'John', written over a light grey scribbled-out area.

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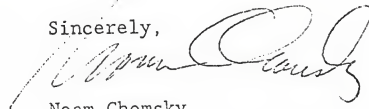
May 28, 1990

Dear Jose Goñi,

Enclosed is a copy of the paper I mentioned to you, for the Glasgow conference on Self-determination and Power. It's quite long. If you feel it is appropriate for your volume, you might want to cut it down some. Also, if you'd like to go ahead, I think it would be proper to write a letter to James Kelman (address below), who is editing the Glasgow volume. He's a fine libertarian Scottish novelist. I'm sure they'll have no objections (I'm dropping him a note myself), but I think it would be a good idea.

Hope to make it to your corner of the world before too long. My daughter and her family will be out there in a few weeks. Maybe you'll run into them (Avi Chomsky, Jon Aske, Sandi Aritza (their year-old daughter)).

Sincerely,



Noam Chomsky

James Kelman
244 West Princes Street
Glasgow G4 9DP
Scotland

Joseba Goñi
Estrada de Goyenetxe, 15
SANTA MARIA DE GETXO
GETXO - VIZCAYA
Spain.

June 26, 1990

Dear James Kelman,

We are enclosing a copy of the last letter we have received from Noam Chomsky. As you may know we (a popular magazine of the Basque Country) organized a few months ago a Congress on Individual and Collective Rights (self- determination). We invited Noam Chomsky but he couldn't come.

As you can see he has sent us the paper he presented in Glasgow thinking that it would be quite suitable for the Volume we are going to publish. We have translated it into Basque and Spanish and before editing we are asking for your permission to include it in our Volume.

If your answer is affirmative - and I hope it will be - we will go ahead and as soon as we finish it we will send you a couple of copies of the Volume.

Thank you very much for all your kindness and waiting for your reply

Sincerely

J. Goñi

Joseba Goñi
Estrada de Goyenetxe, 15
Santa Maria de GETXO
VIZCAYA
SPAIN

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

20D-219

Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

July 16, 1990

Dear Jim,

Thanks for the instructive material you sent. I was particularly glad to see the article on Rushdie. About Young, can't say I really understood what he was talking about. I think your decision to let it pass is wise.

I'm glad to hear that there was some follow-up (including backlash, always good to make one think one is doing something right) to the conference. More coming, I hope. Glad also to hear that the book and film are coming along. I've just been busy turning the paper I sent you for the conference into a large part of a chapter in a forthcoming book, probably Verso, tentatively titled "Deterring Democracy." Slowed down just now by a (very pleasant) several week visit from my daughter and year-old granddaughter. Grandparenthood has all the advertised features -- lots of pleasures, and the lingering ability to give the brat back to her mother when the going gets out of hand; not a luxury to enjoy the first time around.

Got a note from Tom Leonard saying that the book is on the way. Looking forward to seeing it. Keep in touch.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Noam Chomsky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

20D-219

Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

October 29, 1990

Dear Jim,

Hope your trip to Newfoundland went well. Sounds marvellous. Never passed a whale when we sail at Cape Cod (we have a nineteen-foot day sailer), but sometimes we've come upon dolphins. Sometimes, in fact, even sail right around them. My son, who is an avid windsurfer, has ambled about right among them. They seem to enjoy it. But jigging a squid? Don't know what it is, but I do know that I don't want to do it. Glad to see that the Canadian government is working hard on the things that really matter, like making sure that some poor slob doesn't pick up a bottle without taxes.

Down at the cape, there are the same kinds of problems for the fishermen. It is an increasingly hard life. The fishing grounds are depleted, income is so low that the equipment is deteriorating, young folk just go away and apart from a few odd-balls who just like the life (which is tough, especially in winter), the crews get older and older.

I've had an invitation from St. John's for a couple of years, but haven't been able to work it out yet. If I do, maybe a side trip to the Burin Peninsula. Maybe we can time it right and run a joint seminar on Scottish common sense philosophy (maybe I'll know enough about it by then to participate). Think the locals would enjoy it, as a change?

Much enjoyed seeing your article in Edinburgh Review. Hope that the last story breaks through -- and that things are going well.

Best,



244 West Princes Street
Glasgow G4 9DP
Scotland
041 334 7388

8th June, 1989

Alan Fountain
Channel Four
Charlotte Street
London

Dear Alan Fountain,

I am not sure whether or not you will know my name, I'm a novelist and short story writer (my most recent novel *A Disaffection* received fair publicity). Don Coutts gave me your address and telephone number and recommended I make contact with you as soon as possible on the following matter:

On January 10th, 11th and 12th here in Glasgow myself and others are holding a three day event - strictly nonacademic though academics attending under their own steam will be as welcome as anyone, almost - under the general heading "Self Determination and Power", subheadings "a life task, a political task" "tradition and existence". The key speech takes place on the Wednesday and the speaker will be Noam Chomsky with whom I have been corresponding.

We hope for a participating group of some 250 to 300 people, most of whom will be there by invitation. Alongside Chomsky there shall be other guest speakers; it is hoped that these will include such names as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, George Davie, June Jordan, Jerome Rothenberg, Tom Leonard, Adonis, Christa Woolf; essentially writers who have in common that their work extends toward 'tradition-bearing' where this has become an active struggle in one way or another. Ngugi is a good example at present; nowadays he writes exclusively in the language of his own cultural group (Gikuyu), and his latest novel is banned in Kenya - apparently the government there tried to arrest the central character in it, before discovering the life was a fiction. An aspect of this is the line concerning selfhood/nationhood and independence, where colonial rule has been followed by neocolonial rule. So far are the Kenyan authorities from allowing a person the 'right' of self determination the powers-that-be have proscribed the 'right' of the artist to self expression, but this is the case in most countries of the world. The fight on behalf of cultural 'self determination' has been happening in literature for around 200 years. Unfortunately at a later stage the struggle occasionally degenerates from the affirmation of a language and/or culture to the point of tradition at all costs, especially at that of the individual, i.e. tradition at the

expense of existence, where art becomes simply heritage; and from there the path spirals downwards into 'blood and soil' politics, the 'purity' of a language becoming the 'purity' of a race, and so on.

The majority of the people invited to participate for the three days (Chomsky is staying for both the Wednesday and the Thursday) will be activists in one way or another, usually in local politics, eg. tenants groups, the anti-poll tax organisers, anti-racist groups, women's self help groups etc.; it will also include people invited from outside Scotland and elsewhere - I hope someone from the Leningrad '82 writers' group (writers who aren't part of the official Writers' Union) will take part, also representatives from UMOJA, the A.W.C. Thus a number of folk directly involved in diverse self determining activities will be drawn together, the intention being that space and time are given over to an exchange of knowledge, experience, information etc., that general points will emerge through process.

Once Chomsky has given his key address on the Wednesday forenoon, a reply or addendum of some sort will come from somebody who is fairly well known in Scottish public life - someone aware not only of Chomsky's work in international politics but who has a grasp of his work in the study of language and philosophy in general. This person won't be an academic, thus consolidating the 'generalist' 'democratic intellect' feel to things, the sense that a genuine dissemination of knowledge is in process and that ordinary people (people who have not had higher education) are not being excluded from the discourse. After lunch all participants, including guest speakers, will be sectioned off into groups of around 15 to 20 individuals - the place we are situating the event (The Pierce Institute, Govan) has many different style rooms and areas where each group/workshop can hold their own forum. With luck some concrete things will emerge, and with more luck, bonds may be formed that go beyond the three day period. The 2nd and 3rd days are programmed similarly, with the other guests giving the opening talk each morning. In late afternoon a plenary discussion will also be led by one of the other invited guest speakers. In the evening there will be a concert; not only musicians will take part here but poets and prose writers who are used to performing their work in public - such names as Wally Serote, Kathy Acker, Alasdair Gray, Tom Raworth, Sorley Maclean, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Mahmood Jamal will be invited.

We are still working out the details but the above represents where we are at present. The reason I have made contact with yourself concerns filming and the backing of it by Channel Four - I should also mention that Don is himself very keen on being involved. It occurred to myself and the other main organiser (Derek Rodger who edits the magazine THE SCOTTISH CHILD) that something based on the three day event would not only be exciting, because of the names involved it would be marketable in countries like Holland, Sweden, West Germany, U.S.A.,

Canada, possibly Cuba. The ideal slot would be the Eleventh Hour one, and the duration of the programme would be around the 1 hour 15 to 30 minute mark. If I was a filmmaker myself, at the risk of presumption, I would be wanting to go about for the three days and nights with the camera on my shoulder, maybe following the process through one or two of the small groups - the musicians and performance poets and prose writers from the evening concerts will also be asked to participate as ordinary group members.

Don has told me that budgets operate on an annual basis and that the year from April '89 to April '90 will already have been accounted for, but he also said there would be contingency funding available, if a project was considered exciting enough to warrant a special effort. We think this project is exactly that, and that it must be recorded; I hope you will give it a full consideration on behalf of Channel Four. I am aware that there is also the possibility of a development budget; is there something through the Scottish connection? Such a budget would allow for the expenses accruing on setting the event up, to include air travel, hotel fees and so on - around £5 to £8000 we estimate.

I rarely get to London these days, but towards the middle of next week I shall be there, and if it is convenient for you - and you are interested in discussing the matter further - we could meet for a brief chat about it. Thanks for your attention so far.

Yours sincerely,



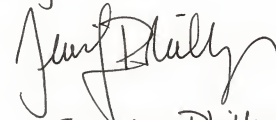
James Kelman.

October 19, 1989
Hotel Viru
Tallinn, Estonia
S.S.R.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 20 year old American student. Today, I was approached by an Estonian man who asked me to mail a letter outside of the country for him. I was overwhelmed by the desperation: this man came up to a complete stranger and asked her to mail something that was obviously dear to him. After being in Tallinn only 3 days, we have heard the words: unjust, conquered, oppressed, "them", and other negative slurs countless times. For this reason, if it were up to me, I would give this plea for recognition top priority. I sincerely hope you will do the same.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jennifer Phillips
University of Wisconsin-
Madison

16 February 1990

Mr James Kelman
244 West Princes Street
GLASGOW G4 9DP

Dear Jim

Many thanks for your letter of 5 February. I shall await developments and am confident that whatever you submit will be in order.

I enclose a cutting from the Tribune, which you may or may not have seen. Where do they get their information from? How is it possible to be so wrong? Ah well!....

Best wishes
Yours sincerely

Walter

Walter Cairns
Literature Director

Внимание!
Образец написания цифр индекса:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Free University
c-o Transmission Gallery
28 King St.
Glasgow G1 5QP
U. K.

Et firm
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hos sig

Куда _____

Кому _____

Индекс предприятия связи и адрес отправителя

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Письмо индекс предприятия связи место назначения

Tallinn 17. 10. 89

Dr. organisers.

I'm one of the three elected leaders of the regional independent youth organisation in Tallinn. Our organisation is called Independent Unity of Tallinn /Tallinna Sõltumatu Malev/ and we are striving for total independence to Estonia. We are greatly interested to attend your gathering. We are ready to make a review or speech about Estonian independent youth movement (in english). If you accept our participation, please send us an official invitation, as soon as, possible to the gathering and more information.

Our addresses:

1. Randam Feldberg
Läänemere tee 23 -29
200 039 Tallinn
Estonia, USSR
2. Jaan Hatto
Pärnu mnt 375
200 009 Tallinn
Estonia, USSR
3. Heikki Riim
Kalinini 35 -12
200 017 Tallinn
Estonia, USSR

Please send the invitation to first address

With greetings from Tallinn

 Hatto

Please send me the details
of the Self-Determination Org
when you have them ready -
We are the Men - are all into
performing - and if you give
us posters to distribute or tickets
to sell etc - please send
them to us in plenty
time - hope you'll well
and look forward to seeing
you soon - regards Jayne

JAYNE TAYLOR POST CARD
FLAT 1/2
52 CLEVELAND STREET
CHARING CROSS
GLASGOW G3 7AD
SCOTLAND UK



ADDRESS

Jim Kelman
~~% Manghill Arts Centre~~
~~Malloch Street~~
~~Manghill~~

~~G20~~
244 WEST PRINCES ST
GLASGOW
G4 9DP

21 November 1989

Mr James Kelman
244 West Princes Street
GLASGOW G4 9DP

Dear Jim

This is a brief informal letter to let you know that the Literature Committee decided, at its meeting last Friday, to offer a grant of £750 and a guarantee of £250 towards the event in January next year. I hope this will make things possible.

Perhaps I should say that the Committee was enthusiastic about the nature of the event and only critical, as I suspected, about what it considered to be the excessive proportion spent on general administration.

You will, of course, receive a formal offer letter in due course, and after this is formally accepted you will receive the grant element without further delay. If the guarantee requires to be called up, this can be considered on receipt of your statement of accounts.

With best wishes
Yours sincerely

Walter

Walter Cairns
Literature Director

10 JAN 1999 "OUTWRITE"

THE NIGHT before Noam Chomsky arrived in Glasgow last week to deliver his keynote address to the "Self-Determination and Power" event at the Pearce Institute in Govan, he dropped in on Edinburgh to give a talk at the university, organised by local Third World development groups. It was packed out, and people queued outside throughout in the hope that somebody might leave. The "Chomsky Event", as the Glasgow conference became known in local parlance, was similarly oversubscribed and enthusiastic. Chomsky spoke twice and spent most of the rest of his time being interviewed, by the press and by the collection of admirers whose efforts had brought him to Scotland. When asked to respond to a plenary session on the first day, he pointed out that he was "not an oracle". Later, he added that he sees his function as that of a lightning-rod, jetted in to conferences all around the world. His fame draws people of many affiliations together, he talks a bit then makes a tactical withdrawal, leaving them to listen to each other instead.

Noam Chomsky comes to Govan

The metaphor of lightning-rod applies not only to Chomsky's behaviour as a public speaker but also to the content of his political thinking. He considers all people to be born with "an instinct for freedom". The only obstacle to their giving vent to this instinct is that they are denied access to power, crucially through being denied access to information about how government works and what it performs in the people's name. The simplicity of this position sears through centuries of obscurantism, and is of course extremely unfashionable in the present post-modern philosophical climate. But the many objections that could be made as to first principles or ultimate ends are of no interest to Chomsky. For him, the point is that he can work to free the libertarian instinct, making available through books, essays and lectures an analysis of government – in particular the United States Government – as corrupt, strategically dishonest, often very stupid in the way it underestimates its populace and hence not all-powerful. "The really dangerous thing," as he said at one point, "would be if America produces a demagogue who is clever and interested in power alone. Reagan was just a clown and everybody knew perfectly well he was just a clown. Bush is only a manager. The Christian fundamentalist preachers are all so corrupt they aren't yet a problem. If somebody comes along who's clever and isn't interested in sex or money, we'll be in real trouble." Chomsky's contributions, in form and content, hit political debate in Britain like a breath of fresh air – particularly in Scotland, where old socialist and nationalist mythologies run so thick as to become claustrophobic. When questioned about ideological allegiances, he said he couldn't call himself a "Marxist" or a "socialist" – "to me that's like saying you're a Baptist, that you belong to a sect. Some ideas are useful, others become redundant as the world changes."

The idea of bringing Chomsky to Scotland came to James Kelman, the short-story writer and novelist, when he started work on a long essay on Chomsky's work for *Edinburgh Review* magazine about two years ago. Kelman found connections between Chomsky's crystal-clear vision of radical democracy and the eighteenth-century Scottish philosophy of common sense, a school of thought once lost but rediscovered by the Edinburgh philosopher George Elder Davie, another conference speaker. While Margaret Thatcher found in the works of Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson the roots of modern conservatism, Davie – and Kelman – saw the philosophy of common sense as a useful context in which to reinvent anti-authoritarian grass-roots political ideas for a time in which Labour socialism seemed hopelessly hidebound.

The Glasgow Free University project, a loose grouping of political activists and intellectuals, took up the idea; more resources came from *Scottish Child* magazine, recently established to draw together and politicise Scotland's professional carers, teachers, "anybody interested in Scotland's future". The event was self-financing. Its refusal of political alignment precluded interest from the Labour or nationalist movements, the Scottish Arts Council turned it down, and the event had nothing to do with the European City of Culture. The biggest overall sponsor was a local bar, the Scotia, which did all the catering for free. Volunteers from community groups round Govan and from the Free University took on all administration.

The idea behind the event was to combine the chance to hear an expert with sessions working from people's place in the here and now. There were workshops on racism, housing, feminism, the poll tax, non-sectarian anarchism, small-press bookstalls, readings and music from local and invited artists. All the whole-group sessions, many of the smaller workshops and vox-pops from participants, who ranged from ministers and Scottish media stars to serious Situationists, were taped. A book and video cassette will be coming out soon.

JENNY TURNER

● The author is books editor of *City Limits* magazine.

Paul Anderson,
c/o Kelman,
244 West Princes St,
Glasgow G4

15th December 1989

Dear *Paul Anderson,*

Self Determination & Power Event - Pearce Institute 10-11th Jan
1990

Thank you for your application to the above event. You have been successful in getting a place on Day 1 (10th) and Day 2 (11th).

The enclosed programme is your ticket for the event. When you arrive, please present this at reception and we will be able to check your name against the membership list. Reception is open from 9.30 am on each of the days, when coffee will be served. As the event has attracted the limit of 300 people on each day, please try to be punctual.

You will note from the programme that the event is organised into talks, big group discussion time, small group discussions, optional workshop presentations, and informal social time with readings and music in the evenings.

The small group discussions have been designed to give everyone who attends the chance to contribute. These groups which start each afternoon will be led by an event member designated by the organisers. The groups will be made up of a cross-section of interests, and you will find a group list in the folder you get when you arrive.

Optional workshop presentations give the chance to participants to share an aspect of the event's theme from their own experience. A full list of what workshops are on offer each day will be available. Some workshop slots are still free, and we welcome further interest. Phone Keith Miller on 041-427-6398 to organise.

RENFREW DISTRICT COUNCIL.



Your Ref. .. My Ref. & File Date Tel. 041 889 3151 Ask for
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DIRECTOR OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES

J.D. Hendry
M.A., F.L.A., F.S.A. (Scot), F.B.I.M.

MUSEUM AND ART GALLERIES SERVICE
HIGH STREET
PAISLEY
RENFREWSHIRE
PA1 2BA

Tony Sweeney Esq.
Manager,
The Dean Park Hotel,
Renfrew.

Dear Mr Sweeney,

Both Fiona Michie of the Renfrew Development Company, and Drew Gibson of Renfrew District Council, recommended that I contact you. I am involved in the organising committee to bring Naom Chomsky to Glasgow and Paisley next week, and I would like to make a formal booking for Mr Chomsky and for the chairman of the Organising Committee for 4 nights: 8,9,10 and 11 January. Mr Chomsky is regarded as one of the world's foremost philosophers and we are delighted that he is able to come to Scotland during Glasgow's City of Culture celebrations. I enclose a photocopy from the Glasgow Herald for your information.

I spoke with a member of your staff, Miss Iona McIntyre, during last week and she was most helpful, showing me the type of rooms available and the various facilities which the Dean Park has to offer. On this basis can I confirm that we would be glad to book an American Twin and a Double Room for the four nights. I understand that you might also be prepared to consider some element of discount for our group, and if this was the case we would be very grateful. As a writers' co-operative we are glad of any help that we can receive. I understand that you will be at the Dean Park tomorrow. I shall call in to discuss this matter with you, at your convenience.

We hope that Mr Chomsky's party will arrive from Glasgow Airport at approximately 1 pm.

Yours sincerely

J.D. Hendry

J.D. Hendry
Department of Arts and Libraries
Renfrew District Council.